

P.J. Dougherty
Wind Powering America Initiative

Remarks to

Communities of Color Outreach/Black Farmer's Association Meeting
Oklahoma City, OK

September 1, 2001

Thank you Dr. LaDonna McGowan for your introduction, and thank you to the leadership and staff of Langston University. I've been around this premier Historically Black College and University for a couple of days now and it's been a true pleasure. Thank you very much for your hospitality and friendship during my stay.

First, I'd like to share a bit of personal information with you that may seem very obvious just by looking at me. I am not a farmer. Actually, it's worse than that. I'm really a New Yorker. So I'm very pleased to be here to discuss the Department of Energy's effort to promote wind power and help our rural communities explore this New Crop for the 21st Century.

The Department of Energy launched the Wind Powering America Initiative about two years ago to help move wind technology further into the generation portfolio. A challenge to the country was also issued -- produce five percent of our electricity from wind by 2020, five percent of Federal electricity by 2010, and triple the number of states that have significant wind capacity. Ambitious goals for sure.

Why would we do such a thing as promoting wind development? For several reasons. First, it is good for the country, states, and localities. Wind development would expand and thereby strengthen our energy portfolio, help stabilize electricity prices, capture economic benefits like jobs and investment, and provide us with a quick and cheap way to ensure reliable power and clean air simultaneously.

Second, it is good for competition and consumers. More suppliers of electricity means a generally lower price product and more choice for consumers. It also means a shot for U.S. companies to develop U.S. resources, keeping our electricity dollars working at home instead of abroad.

Third, it is good for our national investment. It builds on the public research and development efforts made since 1978 and moves us past the science to the marketplace. It adds another "D" after R&D -- delivery on behalf of taxpayers and ratepayers.

Last and no less important, it is good for rural America. Our greatest wind resources are in the "Breadbasket" of our country, our rural areas from the Dakotas to Texas and back up in the shape of a "U" to Washington and Montana. Rural Americans in this area know the value of their land and the resources below, on, and after today, above it. They also know best how to use their

land and protect and respect it. This area is also where our greatest need for economic development lies.

What are the benefits we can achieve from wind development? If we meet our 5% of electricity from wind goal, the economic benefits alone are staggering. Success in achieving the 5% goal means more than \$60 billion in capital investment in our rural areas. This equates to almost \$1.5 billion in direct payments to rural landowners, farmers, ranchers, and Tribal members for land leases to site projects. It also means hundreds of millions in taxes, infrastructure improvements, and other payments to school districts, our counties, states and the national treasury. And I haven't even discussed the benefits from lower air emissions from power production and the benefits to the public health. Success therefore would mean stronger communities and stronger families. It would help preserve the rural way of life as an option for future generations, should they choose.

How do we get there? Several activities need to be undertaken to lay the groundwork for project development. First, we need to examine the wind resource. Different wind velocities make for different economics for projects and often decide which will be economically viable. Generally speaking, the better the wind resource the better the site. But we need to also examine the existing infrastructure and physical environment. Are potential sites near the transmission grid, and if not, how far away? Are the good sites on public lands or near sensitive areas, like preserves or Native American burial sites?

We need to examine the regulatory and legislative framework in the area, most likely at the state and local level. Are there incentives in place aimed at leveling the playing field for new generation technology like wind? Is grid interconnection available and affordable? Are siting requirements reasonable? Does state tax and other policy send a signal to developers that this is a good climate to operate? Can a project developer and financier consider this environment as reasonable and rational when it comes to planning?

Finally, we need to understand our constituents -- the people on the ground. Is development something they want or need? Are they responsive to responsible development? As we've said before, we can not make this decision for others. In the end it is their future and they know what's best for them. What we hope we are providing is the information necessary to make an informed decision and the tools necessary to begin down the path towards acting on that decision. I'm happy to say that here in Oklahoma, we can put a check next to each of the areas I've just mentioned.

You should know that you are not alone in this venture. Your sister states are also engaged in these activities because the resource is there, the need is there, the opportunities are there, and the people want to move forward and have asked for our help. We've heard them and answered by providing tools to measure wind resources, through our anemometer loan program with the states and tribes. We're helping them understand the constraints to development and have funded a number of critical analyses of regional transmission grids as well as detailed wind mapping. We've helped educate developers on potential resource rich areas and brought them with us on our "Roadshow." Today we have Dale Osborne, someone who forgets more about wind

development every morning than we'll ever learn, with us. We've undertaken outreach to Governors, legislators, and regulators across 12 states and did the same last night when we meet with Oklahoma's Secretary of Commerce and shared with him Oklahoma's wind story and our vision to realize that untapped potential.

Some of these activities are already underway here in Oklahoma, and we support a strong partnership with the Oklahoma Renewable Energy Council. We're going to look to them to help us with this focussed outreach effort to your community. But more needs to be done. Unfortunately our positive message has not reached the communities that need it the most. We understand this and know that we need to refocus our attention to make sure no participant is left behind.

Through our "Communities of Color" initiative we will bring the option of wind development to our Nation's black farming and ranching communities. We will work with state and local officials, colleges and universities, farming and rural sector associations, churches, and economic and energy advocates, to examine wind resources as a new crop for harvesting for black farmers and landowners.

This will take a dedicated effort on our part and yours. We need a few people out of this group here today to step forward and say yes, we want to explore our options and develop a plan forward to understand and possibly harvest this resource. If you take that first step we will provide the technical tools you need to move ahead, like we did in the Dakotas, Kansas, and Nebraska, to explore use of wind generated power for farming and rural applications, such as dairy operations and irrigation of crops and leasing your land to project developers. We'll help you engage your legislators and regulatory officials, opinion leaders and project developers and let them know that you are interested in wind development, like we did in Idaho, West Virginia, Utah, New York, Pennsylvania, and Puerto Rico. We'll help you examine new ownership models of wind power generation through development of rural and urban electric cooperatives in Communities of Color by working with the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association and the Rural Utility Service. We'll help explore markets for that power by examining the use of public and private sector diversity procurement guidelines.

Most important, we'll show you that you can succeed just as others have in expanding your economic base while creating a better future for next generations by harvesting this oldest and never ending crop -- the wind. That's our vision, and we appreciate the opportunity to present it to you.